

**REMARKS**

It is noted that the restriction requirement has been withdrawn by the present Examiner, thereby making the election in the Response filed on April 25, 2006 moot.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 1 174 525 A2; claims 17, 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 1 124 269 A2 (cited on IDS #0405); and claim 23 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 1 124 269 A2 as applied to claim 17, and further in view of U.S. 5,571,603.

Claims 1-16 are allowed; and the Examiner has indicated that claims 20-22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 17 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 20 which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable; claim 18 is cancelled; claim 19 is amended to depend from claim 17; and claim 20 is cancelled. Accordingly, claims 17 and 19 should now be allowable.

Claim 21 has been cancelled and rewritten in independent form as new claim 24 which should now be allowable.

Claim 22 has been cancelled and rewritten in independent form as new claim 25 which should now be allowable.


Claim 23 is dependent on claim 17, as amended, and thus should now be allowable.

AKIYAMA ET AL.  
Appl. No. 10/516,333  
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In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that claims 1-17, 19, and 23-25 are allowable to Applicants. Formal allowance of all of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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